

IN THE CLAIMS:

A complete listing of the claims is set forth below. Please amend the claims as follows:

1. **(Currently Amended)** An article of manufacture which comprises a guard sized and configured for detachable attachment to a housing of a reciprocating saw independent of the saw, which saw comprises ~~[[a]]~~ at least one saw blade, wherein the guard forms at least one flexible surface which in turn defines an aperture which extends through the guard and which aperture is sized and configured to allow the blade to extend ~~[there through]~~ therethrough, and wherein at least a portion of the flexible surface contacts at least a portion of the blade when the blade extends through the aperture so that at least a portion of the guard flexes with the movement of the blade to thereby facilitate the maintenance of contact between the blade and the surface in order to inhibit entry of liquid or particulate matter into the housing when the saw is in use.

2. **(Original)** An article according to Claim 1 wherein the guard is formed at least in part from a material selected from the group consisting of plastic, rubber, synthetic monomer, and synthetic polymer.

3. **(Original)** An article according to Claim 2 wherein the guard is formed at least in part from ethylene propylene diene monomer.

4. **(Original)** An article according to Claim 1 wherein the saw is a cordless saw powered by a battery.

5. **(Currently Amended)** An apparatus comprising:

(A) a reciprocating electrical saw comprising at least one blade extending from a housing; and

(B) a guard sized and configured [for detachable attachment to the housing of

the saw] to be attachable and removable from the housing of the saw, such that the housing remains assembled during attachment and removal, wherein the guard forms at least one flexible surface which in turn defines an aperture which extends through the guard and which aperture is sized and configured to allow the blade to extend [there through] therethrough, and wherein at least a portion of the flexible surface contacts at least a portion of the blade when the blade extends through the aperture so that a portion of the guard flexes with the movement of the blade to thereby facilitate the maintenance of contact between the blade and the surface in order to inhibit entry of liquid or particulate matter into the housing when the saw is in use.

6. **(Original)** An apparatus according to Claim 5 wherein the guard is formed at least in part from a material selected from the group consisting of plastic, rubber, synthetic monomer, and synthetic polymer.

7. **(Original)** An apparatus according to Claim 6 wherein the guard is formed at least in part from ethylene propylene diene monomer.

8. **(Cancelled).**

9. **(Original)** An apparatus according to Claim 5 wherein the saw is a cordless saw powered by a battery.

10. **(Currently Amended)** A method for protecting ~~[[a]]~~ an assembled reciprocating saw from liquid or particulate debris generated while a saw blade of the saw works upon an object to be cut, the method comprising:

(1) attaching to a housing of the assembled saw a guard so that the saw blade extends through an aperture which extends through the guard and which aperture is sized and configured to allow the blade to extend [there through] therethrough but to remain at least partially in contact with the guard so as to form a barrier which inhibits the liquid or debris from passing between the blade and the guard; and

(2) activating the saw while maintaining the barrier formed between the guard

and the blade so that the debris is restricted from entry into the housing of the assembled saw during use of the saw.

11. **(Cancelled).**

12. **(Original)** A method according to Claim 10 wherein the saw is a cordless saw powered by a battery.

13. **(Currently Amended)** A kit comprising:

(A) a reciprocating saw which includes [[a]] an assembled saw motor housing;

(B) a guard sized and configured for detachable attachment to the assembled housing of the saw, wherein the guard forms at least one flexible surface which in turn defines an aperture which extends through the guard and which aperture is sized and configured to allow a saw blade to extend [there through] therethrough, and wherein at least a portion of the flexible surface contacts at least a portion of the blade when the blade extends through the aperture so that a portion of the guard flexes with the movement of the blade to thereby facilitate the maintenance of contact between the blade and the surface in order to inhibit entry of liquid or particulate matter into the housing when the saw is in use.

14. **(Original)** A kit according to Claim 13 further comprising at least one blade configured for attachment to the saw.

15. **(Cancelled).**

16. **(Original)** A kit according to Claim 13 wherein the saw is a cordless saw powered by a battery.

17. **(Cancelled).**

18. **(Cancelled).**

19. **(Cancelled).**